

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

- Recognize elements of a response to literature
- Write a response to literature

RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

You will need photocopies for students of:

- **Student Lesson Summary**, p. 339
- **Teaching Model**, p. 341
- **Template**, p. 342
- **Guidelines for Peer Response**, p. 343
- **Rubric**, p. 345

Teach

- 1. Introducing Response to Literature:** Explain to students that a response to literature describes the writer's reactions to and thoughts about a literary work.
 - Ask students where they would be likely to find responses to literature. (*Sample: In a book review*)
 - Ask students what features a response to literature should have.
- 2. Teaching Response to Literature:** Distribute the **Student Lesson Summary** and review the **Here's How** strategies for prewriting, drafting, and revising a response to literature.
 - Ask students to describe works of literature that they feel has meaning to them or to everyday life. Then ask them to describe what the text means and why they remember it or relate to it.
 - Ask: What do you think makes a good response to literature?
- 3. Guided Practice for Prewriting and Drafting a Response to Literature:** Distribute the **Teaching Model** to the class. Have students read the response to literature in the **Teaching Model**. Tell students they will recognize several of the **Here's How** strategies and remind them to pay attention to the bold text and notes. Lead a discussion of the strategies, using the following points.
 - **Noting Passages:** Ask: Which passages are important to this writer? (*Sample: The writer cites several bits of dialogue from the story, such as "Even people do bad things without meaning to" and "Of course, having that shirt will help." The response does not lean heavily on particular passages—it is more concerned with the events and characters.*)
 - **Drafting a Thesis:** Ask: What is the thesis statement? Does it represent the writer's overall response? (*Sample: The thesis statement is "In her story 'Crow Call,' Lois Lowry shows how a father who has just returned from war manages to show his daughter how he feels without actually telling her." It does represent the writer's overall response because the rest of the essay discusses that idea.*)
 - **Creating a Powerful Introduction:** Ask: How does the introduction grab readers' attention? Does it outline the writer's response? (*Sample: The introduction grabs readers' attention by making an interesting statement in the first sentence. It does explain the writer's response.*)

WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE , CONTINUED

- **Outlining:** Write a simple outline on the board. Fill it in with student responses. Ask: How would you outline the response? (*Sample: 1. Introduction—some things are easier to show than tell; 2. Beginning of the story—The father is able to see that his daughter wants the hunting shirt without being told; 3. Climax of the story—The father shows his daughter how he feels about the war using crows as a metaphor; 4. End of the story—Lois Lowry shows us how the father decides not to shoot the crows; 5. Conclusion—Reiterates main point from introduction.*)
- **Going Beyond the Evidence:** Ask: Did the writer explain how and why the text produced a certain response? Explain. (*Sample: Yes; the writer says the story was particularly meaningful because it made her think about her relationship with her father. The writer also realizes that in some ways her father is like the father in the story. Finally, the writer says the story made him or her think about ways to become closer to his or her father by paying attention to what is said when nothing is said.*)

4. Guided Practice for Revising and Editing a Response to Literature: Lead a discussion of the revising and editing strategies using the following points.

- **Strengthening Support:** Ask: Does the writer use enough reasons, examples, and explanations? Where would more be helpful? (*Sample: The writer uses a good balance of explanations and examples. More explanations of how certain passages in the text produced certain responses would also be helpful.*)
- **Varying Sentence Beginnings:** Ask: Does the writer vary sentence beginnings? Explain. (*Sample: Yes, sentence beginnings do vary.*)
- **Eliminating Vague Vocabulary:** Ask: Does the writer use vague terms that lack detail? Explain. (*Sample: The writer's language is straightforward and does not lack detail.*)
- **Using Transitions:** Ask: How does the writer use transitions to show the relationship between ideas? Would more transitions be helpful? Explain. (*Sample: The writer uses "In the beginning of the story," "then," "at the climax of the story," and "finally," to show the response's progression through the story. More transitions would not be necessary.*)

QUICK CHECK. Ask students to recommend a book from class or one they are currently reading and discuss aspects of it that could be part of a response to literature essay.

Practice and Apply

Assign students a several-paragraph response to literature to write for homework.

- **Template** should be used to plan responses to literature.
- **Guidelines for Peer Response** is an in-class activity.
- **Rubric** should be used to evaluate responses to literature.